

THE "JOHN T. THORP MS." (E 16 (a)).

By Bro. WM. JAMES HUGHAN, P.G.D.

EARLY this year Bro. Henry Brown, of Northampton, announced the discovery of a vellum MS. of A.D. 1629, and soon afterwards he kindly sent it to me for examination. Having had the pleasure of tracing many MSS. of the "Old Charges," and of naming several, I had decided to call this valuable document the *Henry Brown MS.*, as it seemed likely that it would remain in his possession, notwithstanding the numerous offers made to him for its purchase, when to my surprise, my esteemed friend and Bro. John T. Thorp, of Leicester, informed me that he had become the owner without any restrictions whatever. I immediately wrote to congratulate him on his prize, and suggested that the manuscript be called after his name, which he at once agreed to. It is to be hoped there will be no further change in its title.

The Roll runs to over eight feet, but the MS. itself really occupies nine feet, as the Scribe, apparently being short of vellum, wrote the concluding portion on the reverse, extending to some nine inches. The width averages about five inches, having a margin at the left of three-quarter inch throughout. It is neatly written and nearly every word is easily read. As to its past history I cannot say anything at present.

Had it been traced prior to Dr. Begemann's Classification of the *Old Charges of the British Freemasons (A.Q.C., 1888)*, it would undoubtedly have given its name to the *Family*, represented by the "Sloane MS., No. 3848," of A.D. 1646; the latter at the time of publication of that original and able Paper, being the senior of the group. Now, however, the text is dated back some *seventeen* years, and the "John T. Thorp MS." is the oldest of the "Sloane Family," as well as of the "Sloane Branch"; the latter including the "J. T. Thorp," the two "Sloanes," "Harleian, No. 2054," "Tunnah," and "Briscoe MSS."

The differences between the two MSS. of A.D. 1629 and A.D. 1646, are such as to preclude the possibility of both having been copies from the same original, though they have much in common; and I think it likely that the prototype of the senior document was the older by some years; the "Charges" in that transcript are not numbered as in the "Sloane," and there are indications which suggest that the text of this important Family may be almost as old as that of the larger one called after the "Grand Lodge MS., No. 1," of A.D. 1583.

Bro. Speth in his concise and interesting introductory remarks to the Transcript and Facsimile of the "Sloane MS., No. 3848," notes for the first time, that there are numerous corrections and interlineations which generally are not in Sankey's hand, but in a neater, slightly more modern handwriting. When I had that MS. published in my "Old Charges" (1872), from a transcript made for me by a distinguished expert, these amendments were not noticed or mentioned, which is to be regretted, as they are of importance, and particularly so now that we have the "Thorp MS." for comparison.

Out of 38 of the corrections or additions, *only some three or four are not to be found in the "Thorp MS."*, and these are of a trivial character, so that it seems likely that this Roll was before *Eduardus Sankey* on transcribing what is known as the "Sloane MS." of A.D. 1646, which was copied on the very day and year that Elias Ashmole was initiated (probably for that purpose), as Bro. W. H. Rylands has pointed out. The Scribe, in all probability was a son of Richard Sankey (a Landowner, of Warrington), his age being about 24 at the time. The Father was present at the Lodge when Ashmole and Colonel Mainwaring were initiated, so that although the MS. is a poor one, orthographically considered, it is of considerable interest because presumably read at the famous Masonic reception at Warrington some 250 years ago.

The text of the "Thorp MS." is more correct than the "Sloane" version, either because more carefully transcribed, or the original was more accurate. Under arithmetic the latter has "account and *recount* all manner of numbers" (instead of "account and *rechen*"); "Crafts of Iron and Steele" (the former having "*Gould Silver Copper* Iron and Steele"); and "*holy* Land" (for "*hot* land"). The "Thorp" Roll also goes astray as to this, and reads "*hole* layed." Other peculiarities and errors will easily be discovered on comparing the two documents, but substantially they agree pretty closely from first to last. The Wages in the Roll of A.D. 1629 are cited *iiij^s vi^d*, however, instead of the usual *iiij^s vi^d* of that Family; and possibly the clause "a Mason tooke but 1^d ^dl a day and meate unto the tyme that St. Albon amended it," in lieu of the usual *penny*, may mean 1^d ^dl., unless twice written in error.

The "general charges" in "Sloane" are numbered 1 to 7, the 4th and 5th being the reverse of the "Thorp," and the 7th is very brief, having only the clause,

"Alsoe y^t you doe noe vilanie in that house whereby the Craft shall bee slandered."

The 7th (not numbered) of the "Thorp" Scroll is similar to the 7th and 8th of the invaluable "William Watson MS." viz.,

"And alsoe yo^w shall call Masons yo^r fellowes & brethren neither foule name nor yo^w shall not take yo^r fellowes wyfe in villainy nor desyre ungodlily his daught^r nor his servant to his villayn, & that yo^w pay truly for yo^r table and yo^r meate and drinke where yo^w goe to bord. And alsoe that yo^w do no villany in that howse whereby the Craft may be slandered."

The *William Watson MS.* (1687) reads

7. You shall call Masons yo^r fellowes or yo^r Brethren and by noe other foull name, nor shall yu take yo^r fellowes wife in villany nor further desire his daughter nor servant.
8. And alsoe yt yu pay truely for yo^r meate & yo^r drink wheresoever yu goe to board, alsoe ye shall doe noe villany in ye house whereby ye Craft shall be slandered.

The concluding portion of the Charges is peculiar to the "Thorp MS." and is as follows,

"There shall not any Mason take any prentice excepte the same Mason hath beene p^rntise vij. yeares before, nor the said Mason shall take noe p^rntise but wth the Consent of iiij or vi of his said brethren."

"So helpe yo^w god and holydome

And by this booke to yo^r power

Anno dⁿⁱ 1629."

Every now and then we think "the last MS." has been found, and that we need not continue our researches; but evidently the end is not yet. There is every encouragement to search all likely and unlikely places for old Masonic MSS., for even whilst preparing this brief Introduction to the "Thorp MS.," information has come from Bro. Henry Sadler that the "Henry Heade MS." has been discovered, of A.D. 1675; announced as long missing, in my "Old Charges," of 1895. It is written on paper and is a similiar text to the "William Watson MS.," and is now numbered C4 of the "Plot Family."

This Transcript has been made most carefully by Bro. John T. Thorp and may be relied on, and I have compared it with another copy kindly made for me by Bro. John Lane, so it is doubly safeguarded.

The Mighte of the father of

heaven wth the wisdom of his glorious sonne through the goodnes of the holy ghoste that bee three p^rsons in one godhead bee wth vs at o^r beginnunge & give vs grace soe to gouⁿe in o^r livinge that wee may come to his blisse that neu^l shall have endinge. Good brethren & fellowes o^r purpose is to tell yo^w how & in what mann^r this craft of masonry was begun & afterward ho^w it was founded by worthie kings & Princes, & many othe^r wo^{ll} men And alsoe to them that bee here wee will declare the chardge that belonge to eu^y true mason to keepe ffor in good faith if yo^w take heede thereto it is well worthy to bee kept for aworthy craft & a Curious science ffor there bee seaven liberrall sciences of the w^{ch} it is one of them that be theise folowinge, first is Gram^r that teacheth aman to speake truly & to wryte truly The second is Rhethoricke that teacheth aman to speake faire & in suddell termes, The third is Logick that teacheth do diserne or knowe truth from false, The ffourth is Arithmeticke that teacheth to account & reckon all mann^r of numbers, The ffyft is called Geometrie & it teacheth to mete & measure of the earth & other thinges of the w^{ch} science is

Masonry The sixte is musicke that teacheth the craft of songe and voyce of tonge Orgens & harpe The seaventh is called Astronomy that teacheth to knowe the course of the sunne & moone & other stares, These be the seaven liberall sciences the w^{ch} seven bee all by one science, that is to saie
 30 Geometry Thus may aman prove that all the sciences in the world be found by Geometrie for it teacheth to mete & measure ponderaçon & waight of all mann^r of kind of earth, And there is noe man that worketh by any craft but hee worketh by some measure, Nor noe mann that buys or sells but by mesure & waight And all that is Geometrie & craftsmen & marchants fynd other of the seaven — sciences & especially plowe men & tillers of all man^r of graine both cornes seedes vynes plants sett's of other
 40 fruits ffor Gram^r nether Astronomy nor none of all theise cannot fynd aman one measure or mete w^{thout} Geometrie wherefore I thinke that science is most worthy that fyndeth all other, Howe that this worthy Science was first begun I shall tell yo^w, Before Noyes flood was a man that was called Lamech as it is written in the 4th chapter of Genesis And this Lamech had two wyves the one was called Ada & the oth^r Sella by the first wyf Ada hee begotte two —
 50 sonns the one was called Jabell & the other Juball And by the oth^r wyf Sella, hee had one sonne & a daught^r And these 4 children found the begiñge of all the — crafts in the world This Juball was eld^r sonne & hee found the craft of Geometrie & hee pted flockes of sheepe and lambes in the feild & first wrought house of stone & tree as it is noted in the Chap^r abovesaid — And his broth^r Jabell found musicke of songe harpe and Orgaine The third broth^r Tuball found smith craft of gould silu^r Copp Iron steele, And there
 60 sist^r found the craft of weavinge Theis children did knowe that god would take vengeance for sine eith^r by fyer or water wherefore they wrote the sciences that they had found in two pillars of stone that they might bee found after the flood the one stone was called marble that would not burne wth fyer The oth^r was Laterus that would not drowne in the water Our intent is to tell yo^w truly & in what mann^r theis stones were found that the crafts weare written in This greke Hermermes —
 70 that was sonne to Chus & Chus was sonn vnto — Sem the w^{ch} was sonne vnto Noy, the same — Hermermes was afterward called Hermes the — father of wysemen And hee found of the two pillars of stone & the sciences written therein & taught them forth And at the makeinge of the tower of — Babilon therewas the craft of masonrie first — found & made much of And the kinge of — Babilon That was named Hembrothe —

[Second Strip.]

was a mason & loved well the craft & is said wth m^r of
 80 the stories And when the Cittie of Ninyvie & other Citties of Estazia should bee made Hembroth the kinge of Babilon send thither Sixtie masons at the desyre of the kinge of Nynivye his Cozen and when hee send that them forthe hee gave them achardge on this manner — they should be true & love truly togeath^r And that they should serve theire Lord truly for his payment

- soe that hee might haue worshippe for the sendinge of them to him, And other charges hee gave them And this was the first tyme that any mason had anie —
- 90 charge of his craft Moreover when Abraham and Sara his wyfe went into Egipte there taught the seven sciences & to the Egiptians & hee had a — worthy scoll^r called Evclyed & learned right well and was m^r of all the seaven sciences And in his daies it befell that the lordes & estates of that Realme had soe many sonns that they had gotten some by their wyves & some by other Ladies of that Realme for that land is hole layed & plenished generacon & they had noe lyvinge compotent for their said —
- 100 children wherefore they made much sorrowe And the kinge of that land made agreat counsell & a Parlam^t to knowe ho^w hee might fynd there childⁿ And they could fynd noe good way & caused acrye to be made through the Realme if there were any man that could enforme them that hee should come vnto him And hee should bereward for his travaile that hee should hould himselfe well pleased, After this Crye was made came this worthy clarke Evclyed & said to the kinge & all his great Lords If yo^w will take
- 110 mee yo^r Children to governe & to teach them honestly as gentlemⁿ should vnd^r Condi^{ti}on that yee will grant them & mee a Comission that I haue power to Rule them honestly as that science ought to bee ruled, And the kinge wth his Councell granted them anon & — sealed that Comission & then this worthy Doct^r tooke to him the Lordes sonns & taught them thei^r sciences of Geometrie in practise for to worke in stories all mann^r of worthy workes that belonged to buildinge of Castles all mann^r of Courtes Temples & Churches
- 120 wth all other buildings & hee gave them charge in this mann^r ffirst was that they should betrue to the kinge and the lord that they served & that they should — love togeath^r & to be true one to another & that they should call each other fellowe & not servant nor his knaue nor other foule names And that they should truly deserve their paym^t to the lord that they serve And that they should ordeyne the wysest of them to bee m^r of the Lordes worke & neith^r for love great language nor riches to sett anoth^r that had littell
- 130 cuinge for to bee m^r of the lordes worke whereby the Lord should bee evill served & they asbamed And alsoe that they should call their gouⁿnour of the worke their m^r of the worke whylst they wrought wth him & many other charges that were longe to tell & to all the Charges hee made them sweare the greatest oathes that men vsed that tyme and ordeyned for them reasonable paym^t that they might live by it honestly And alsoe that they should come & semble all their othes that they might have Councell in their craft
- 140 how they might worke best to serve their Lord for his pfitt & worshippe & correcte them selves if they have trespased And thus was the craft of Geometrie grounded their And their worthy m^r — gave it the name of Geometrie & nowe it is called masonrie in this land since Longe after the Children of Israell were come into the land of Behest it is nowe called amonge vs the Cuntry of Jerusalem kinge David began the temple of Jerusalem that is wth them templum domini & the same kinge David
- 150 loved Masons well & cherished them & gave them good paym^t & hee gaue them the charge & manners

as they had it out of Egipt given by Englide & oth^r charges that yo^w shall here afterward, And after the Decease of kinge David Salamon that was sonne vnto David pformed out the Temple that his father hadd begun & hee sent after —

[Third Strip.]

Masons of diu^s landes & gathered them togeth^r soe that hee had fourescore thousand of workers of stone & they were named Masons & had three
 160 thousand of them w^{ch} were ordeyned to bee m^{rs} & gouⁿors of this worke And there was a kinge of an other Region that men called yram & hee loved well kinge Salomon & gave him — Tymb^r for his worke And hee had a sonne that was named Aynon & hee was m^r of Geometric And hee was cheeff m^r of all his masons & m^r of all his gravings & carvinge worke & of all other manner of Masonry that belonged to the Temple And all this wittneseth in the Byble
 170 in libro regum iiij^o prio cap^r and this same — Salomon confirmed both chargis & mann^s — that his father had given to Masons & this — was that worthy craft of Masonry confirmed in the Cuntry of Jerusalem & many other — kingdomes Glorious craftsmen walkinge — about into diu^s Cuntries some because of lerninge more craft & some to teach their craft And soe it befell that there was a Curious Mason that was named Naymus Greeus —
 180 that had beene at the makinge of Salomons — Temple & came into ffrance & hee taught the craft of Masonry to men of ffrance & soe their was one of the reall Lyne of ffrance that was called Charles Martill & was aman — that loved well such acraft & drewe to him this Naymus greeus abouesaid & lerned of him the craft & tooke vpon him the Charges & afterward by the grace of god hee was elect to bee kinge of ffrance And when hee was in
 190 his stall hee tooke to him many Masons & made Masons there that were none & sett them in — worke & gaue them both charges & mann^s & good — pay hee had lerned of other masons & confirmed — them a Charter from yeare to yeare to hould their semble & cherished them much & thus came the — craft into ffrance England in all this season stood voide as for any charge of Masonry vnto the tyme of S^t Albion & in his tyme the kinge of England that was a Pagand & hee walled the Towne of tha^t
 200 is now called S^t Albons & soe in Albans was a worthy knight & was cheef steward wth the kinge & had gouⁿance of the Realme of and also of the makinge of the Towne wall & hee loved well Masons & cherished them & hee made their paym^t right good standinge as the Realme did requier for hee gaue them eu^y weeke iiij^s vj^d there duable wages — before that tyme throughout all the land a Mason tooke but j^d dj aday & meate vnto the tyme that S^t Albion amended it & gave them a Charter of the kinge
 210 & his counsell & gave it the name of Assemble & thereat hee was himself & made Masons & gave them charge as yo^w shall here afterward, Right soone after the decease of S^t Albion there came great warres into England through diu^s nations soe that good rule

of Masonry was descried vnto the tyme of kinge —
 Athelston that was aworthy kinge in England & hee
 brought the land in good rest & peace & builded many
 great workes of Abbeyes Castells & many other diu's —
 buildings & hee loved much Masons, And hee had a —
 220 sonne that was named Hediwine & hee loved Masons
 much more then his father for hee was full of practise
 in Geometrie wherefore hee drew him to comen —
 Masons & to learne of their craft & afterward for
 love that hee had to Masons & to the craft hee was —
 made Mason himself & hee gate of his fath' the kinge
 a Charter & a Comission to hould eu'y yeare asemble
 whereeu' they would wthin the Realme & to corect
 wthin them selues statutes & trespasis that were —
 donne wthin the craft & hee had himself asemble at
 230 yorke & there hee made Masons & gave them chargis
 & taught to them the mann^s of Masons & comanded
 that rule to bee houlden eu' after & to them tooke the
 Charter & Comission to keepe and made ordinances
 that it should bee ruled from kinge to kinge when —
 this assemble was gathered together hee made a
 crye that all Masons both ould & yonge that hadd
 any wrytinge or vnd^rstandinge of the chargis that
 were made before in this land or in any other land
 that they should shew them forth & there were found
 240 some in french & some in greeke some in English & —
 some in other languages & the intent of them was
 found & comanded a booke thereof to bee made & ho^w
 the craft was first made & found & comanded —
 that it should bee redd & tould when that any Mason
 should bee made & to give him his charge & from
 that day vnto this tyme Masonry hath beene kept

[*Fourth Strip.*]

in that forme as well as men might gou'ne it & —
 furthermore at diu's sembles haue beene put & added
 certayn chargis more & more by the best advyse of —
 250 maisters & fellowes Tunc vnus ex Senioribus teneat —
 librum et illi vel ille ponant vel ponat manus sup librum
 et tunc p^rcepta debent legi Every man that is Mason
 take heede right well of this charge if yo^w fynd
 yo^rself guiltie of anie of theis that yo^w may amend
 yo^w againe and especially ye that bee charged
 take good heede that yo^w may keepe this charge for
 it is great pill for aman to forswear him on a
 booke The first charge is that yo^w shall be trewe
 men to god and the holy Church and that yo^w vse
 260 noe Heresie nor error by yo^r vnd^rstandinge or by the
 teachinge of discret men Alsoe yee shall be true
 leigemen to the kinge wthout treason or falshood
 & that yo^w shall knowe noe treason but that yo^w mend
 it if yo^w may or ells warne the kinge or his Councell^l
 thereof Alsoe yo^w shalbe true one to another that
 is to saie to eu'y Maist^r & fellowe of the craft of
 Masonry that bene Masons alowed that yo^w doe
 to them as yo^w would they did to yo^w, And alsoe
 that eu'y Mason keepe true Councell of lodge &
 270 of Councell & of other Councell that ought
 to bee kept by the way of Masonry, And alsoe that
 noe Mason shalbe theef neither in Company —
 as farr forth as hee may knowe And alsoe that
 they shalbee true to the Lord & m^r that they serue
 & truly to see his pfitt & advantage And alsoe
 yo^w shall call Masons yo^r fellowes & brethren &
 neither foule name nor yo^w shall not take yo^r fellows

- wyef in villany nor desyre vngodlily his daught^r
 nor his servant to his villayn & that yo^w pay
 280 truly for yo^r table & yo^r meate & drinke where
 yo^w goe to bord And alsoe that yo^w do no villany
 in that howse whereby the craft may be slandered
 Theis bene the charges ingenerall that eu'y Mason
 should hould both M^{rs} & fellowes, Reherse I will
 now other charges singuler for M^{rs} & fellowes —
 ffirst that no M^r shall take vpon him noe Lords
 worke nor noe other worke but hee knowe him —
 able & cuninge to pforme the same soe that the —
 craft have noe disworshippe but that the Lord may
 290 be well served & truly And alsoe that noe M^r take
 noe worke but hee take it reasonable soe that the
 Lord may be truly served wth his owne good & the
 M^r to live honestly & pay his fellowes truly their
 pay as the mann^r of the craft doth requier And —
 alsoe that noe m^r nor fellowe shall not suplant
 others of their workes that is to saie if hee haue
 taken aworke or ells stand m^r of a Lords worke
 yo^w shall not put him out if he be vnable of —
 cuninge for to end the worke And alsoe that noe
 300 m^r nor fellowe take noe prentice to bee alowed his
 p^rntice how but in vij yeares And that p^rntice bee
 able of his birth & of his limes as hee ought to bee
 And alsoe that noe maister nor fellowe take noe —
 lowance to bee made Mason wthout assent of his fellowes
 that at the least fyve or six And that hee that shalbe
 made Mason bene able ou' all sciences that is to saie
 that hee be free borne & of good kyndred & no bound —
 man and that hee have his right lymes as aman
 ought to have, And alsoe that noe m^r put noe —
 310 Lords worke to take that ought to goe to Journey —
 And alsoe that eu'y mason shall give noe pay to
 his fellowes but as hee may deserve soe that hee
 bee not deceived by false workemen, And alsoe that
 noe fellowe falsly slander another behynd his
 backe to make him loose his good name or his
 worldly good, And alsoe that noe fellowe wthin —
 the lodge nor wthout misanswere another —
 vngodlily wthout reasonable cause, And alsoe —
 eu'y Mason should pferr his elder & put him to
 320 worshippe And alsoe that noe mason shall play at
 hassards nor noe other playes whereby they may bee
 slandered And alsoe that noe mason shalbee no comen
 ryball in Lecherie to make the craft to bee slandered
 And that noe fellowe goe into the Towne in the night
 tyme thereas is a lodge fellowes wthout a fellowe
 that hee may beare him wittnes that hee was in —
 honest place And alsoe that eu'y Maister & fellowe
 come to the semble if it bee wthin ffyftie myles
 about him if hee have any warninge And stand
 330 thereat the reward of maisters & fellowes & alsoe
 that eu'y Maist^r & fellowe if they have trespast
 should stand at the reward of maisters and —
 fellowes to make them accorded if they maye
 And if they may not accord them to goe to the
 Comen Lawe And alsoe that noe mason
 make moulds square nor Rule to rough lyers

[On Back of Last Strip.]

- And alsoe that noe mason sett noe lyer wthin
 a lodge nor wthout to hew mold stones wth
 noe mould of his owne makeinge And alsoe
 340 that eu'y Mason shall receive & cherrysh —

strange fellowes when they come in the —
 cuntry and sett them to worke as the manner
 is that is to saie if hee haue mold stones in —
 place hee shall sett him a fortnight at the
 least in worke and geve him his hyer, And if
 there bee noe stones for him hee shall refreshe
 him wth money to bringe him to the next —
 lodge And alsoe yee shall and eu'y Mason serve
 truly the workes and truly make an end of
 350 yo^r worke bee it taske or Journey if yo^w maye
 have yo^r pay as yo^w ought to have These
 Charges that wee have declared and all —
 other that belongeth to Masonry yo^w shall
 keepe There shall not any Mason take any
 prentice excepte the same Mason hath —
 beene p^rntise vij yeares before nor the said
 Mason shall take noe p^rntise but wth the —
 Consent of iiij or vj of his said brethren
 360 Soe helpe yo^w god & hollydome
 And by this booke to yo^r power
 Anno dni 1629.

[Transcribed by me from the original manuscript,

Leicester, September, 1898,

JOHN T. THORP, P.M.]

